

The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

Ohio State Engineer

Title: The Engineer's Bookshelf

Creators: Dumble, Wilson R.

Issue Date: 1945-03

Publisher: Ohio State University, College of Engineering

Citation: Ohio State Engineer, vol. 28, no. 4 (March, 1945), 12, 26, 28.

URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/36138>

The Engineer's Bookshelf . . .

By WILSON R. DUMBLE

From the several hundred letters that I have received during the last year from former students in the Armed Forces, the two written by Lt. Bruce Herbruck, printed in this column, should be of interest to readers of *The Ohio State Engineer*. Lt. Herbruck, a native of North Canton, sat as a student in two of my English classes about five years ago. That was during the days when he was registered in the College of Engineering. Later, however, he transferred his credits to a Pre-Med course, and when he left the University to enter the Service, he was a student in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Lt. Herbruck is stationed in India with the American Air Force. Both letters were addressed from "Mother India"; the first one was written in August 1944 and the second, last November.

August, 1944

It has been a long time since I have written to you, but I hadn't realized it until I received your May 30 communique yesterday. It had been sent all the way to Kansas and finally caught up with me here; mail usually reaches me in much better time than that.

Just to bring you up to date on my wanderings since I last wrote—and I can't exactly remember when that was—here is a brief resume since Kansas. First stop was Miami where I spent a glorious 10 days soaking up Vitamin D on the beach, losing my shirt at Hialeah in the afternoons, and my respectability at the Five O'clock Club, the Club Bali, and the Surf Club in the evenings. That is my idea of the way to fight a war, but it couldn't last forever—nor could contents of my wallet—so eventually I took off for my overseas duties. The rest of the trip must remain a military secret or the censors will get me even though *Life* can devote several pages to the route which I flew over. It was a very interesting trip, especially since I had several long stopovers en route during which I was able to see a little of several other continents.

India is not really as bad as I had expected it to be—nor is it as good as I had hoped. The climate is perhaps the most disagreeable feature;

April and May were almost intolerably hot with the temperature reaching 150 on several occasions. Now, we are in the middle of the monsoon season which, although it is somewhat cooler, is just as uncomfortable because it is so humid. The next most disagreeable thing about the country is the filth and dirt. The people have no conception of sanitation and a latrine, to them, is just a place for shelter from the rain or sun. Consequently, the villages and towns are modern symphonies of discordant smells. Even the largest city in India—second largest in the British Empire—Calcutta, which I have visited is the same way. It is not unusual to see a dead man or woman's body, bloated by the sun and partially eaten by the dogs or vultures, go floating down the gutter with the rest of the refuse.

On the other hand, if you look for it, it is possible to find beauty in India—and that doesn't pertain to the women. Some of the flowering trees and shrubs are the most spectacular things that I have ever seen. If you can imagine the large elms which formerly lined 15th Avenue in Columbus suddenly bursting into blossom with brilliant scarlet blossoms, you will have some idea of what I mean.

My work here is very interesting and I can think of few things that I would rather be doing in the Army. It can now be told that I am with one of those Super-Fortress units attached to the 20th Air Force that you have probably been reading about. There is a certain thrill attached with watching those big babies take off and knowing that they are on their way to drop their calling cards on the little yellow bastards.

Several weeks ago I flew over the Hump to China in one of our B-29's—another experience which I won't soon forget. The Hump is really a rugged piece of God's green earth, beautiful to fly over but Hell to hike through as some fellows have done. On the return trip we were flying high over a layer of clouds most of the time and so could not see the ground. However, occasionally, a snow covered peak would loom up through the cloud layer and I would thank the Lord for

(Please turn to page 26)

THE BOOKSHELF

(Continued from page 12)

the navigational devices which had taken us around and not through the peak.

Although I was not in China very long, I was there long enough to know that I liked that country much better than India. The people, although not too worried about sanitation, are much cleaner than the Indians and much more friendly. Their honesty and hospitality to our troops there are legendary, while quite the reverse is true here. The brilliant, lush green of the rice paddies against violet backdrop of the distant mountain ranges and clear blue of the sky makes that one of the most beautiful parts of the world that I have seen.

That about covers the high-points of my travels up to this date.

I am always very happy to receive your letters because they tell so much of the things which I like to hear about. Thoughts of the days I spent at OSU and the days that I hope to spend there in the future still occupy a large part of my mental activity. I am still hoping to come back there to get my degree eventually, and the sooner the better. Have any plans been made as yet as to what will be done at the University after the War? Do you think that there will be many changes and whether I will have to take a refresher course before I will be admitted on full Senior status as I should be had the war not interrupted? If it is not too much trouble, could you give my name to someone who will see that I get the latest bulletin for the College or Arts and Sciences—if they are still being published. I have almost forgotten just exactly what courses I did take, how many hours of credit I had, and how many more I need to get my degree. Perhaps it is foolish to be planning for what still seems to be a distant future, but I feel that planning for the future is about the only thing that makes the present worth living. My sergeant is giving me dirty looks, so I gather that he wishes to use this typewriter so I had better close. Sergeants always have frightened me. I hope that I will be hearing from you again soon.

November, 1944

Again apologies are due you for the tardiness of this letter; it is amazing how rapidly time passes here—days accumulate into months and soon the months will add up to a year that I have been in India. We reckon time not with a watch but rather with a calendar, and all of us have our eyes on that still uncertain date when we will return to the States. This being the situation it

is easier for me than usual to procrastinate on my correspondence.

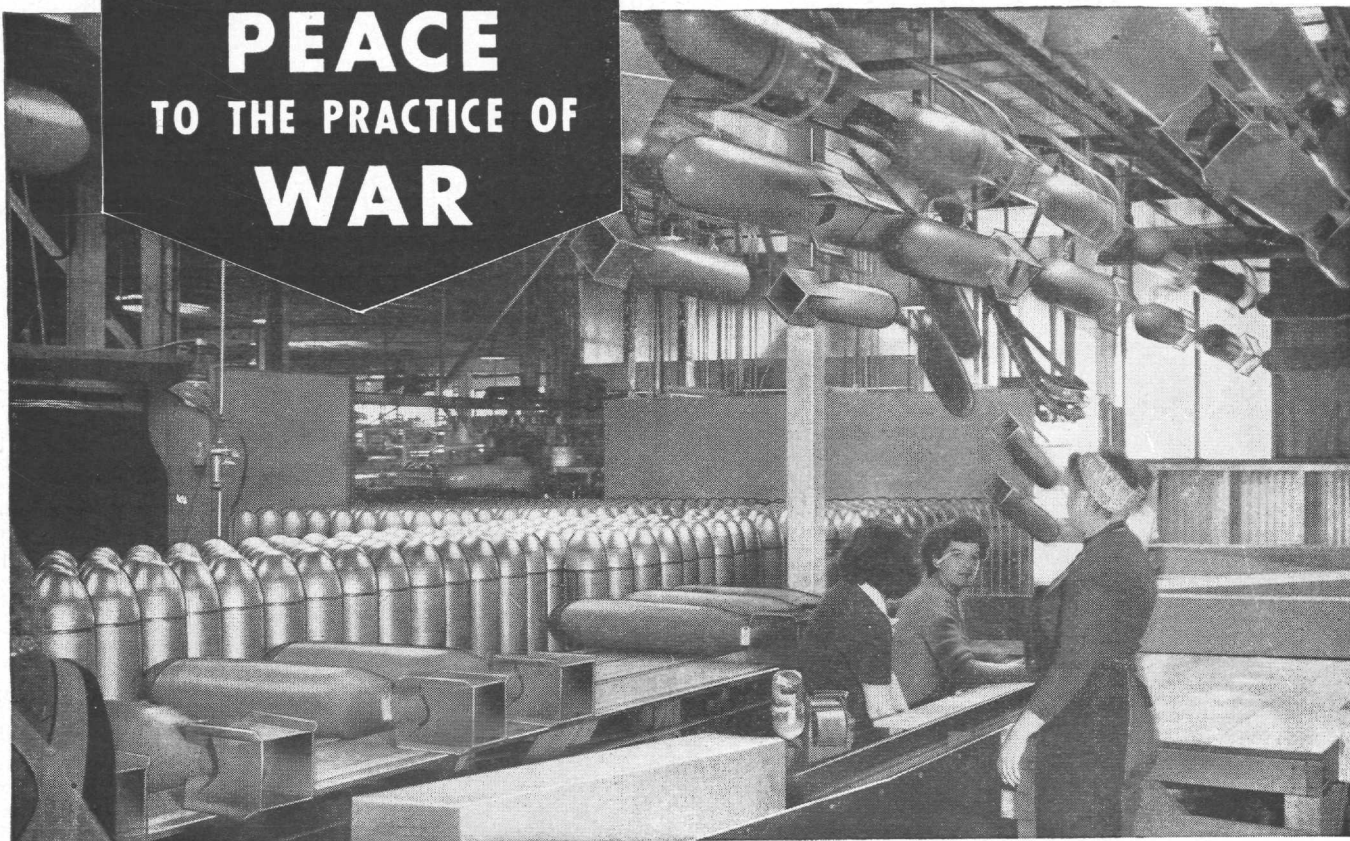
Your fifth letter which I received several months ago was as welcome as its four predecessors were, and I am looking forward to more in the future. I particularly enjoyed the story of your experiences with the discharged Marine and I think that it is only a sample of what the Universities are going to have to contend with as more and more veterans come to them for education. All of us are going to be eager to finish our education as quickly as possible so that we can begin working in our chosen, but temporarily postponed, professions and enjoying "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." I, for one, am hoping that a type of accelerated program will be continued, and I know that many of the other fellows are of the same opinion.

Your references to the uncomfortably warm and humid summer which you had in Columbus made me chuckle a little ironically. As I remember it, on the day which I received your letter, the mercury was hovering around the 120 degree mark, and the humidity was very close to 100 per cent and that wasn't the hottest day of the summer either. However, we are both enjoying cooler weather now, and I imagine that you are as happy about that as I am. Actually, it is not very cool here—the temperature ranges between 70 and 90 degrees—but by comparison it might almost be called frigid. Then, too, the humidity is much lower and that of course makes it more comfortable.

I have just returned from a Rest Leave which I spent at the Army Rest Camp near Ranikhet in northern India. It was a beautiful camp, high in what might be called the foothills of the Himalayas. To the North we could see pile after pile of mountains—most of them snow-capped and many of them towering up to twenty and twenty-five thousand feet—while to the south we saw the terraced and irrigated hillsides dropping off to the valley some six thousand feet below. The camp was established for just the purpose that its name states—rest. For that reason, many of the fellows who were there with me became bored by the inactivity. However, I have just enough laziness in my nature to thoroughly enjoy relaxing and doing nothing but eating and sleeping for fifteen wonderful days. If you wanted exercise, there was ample opportunity for that. I rode horseback for several hours every morning and played golf and tennis several afternoons. Most of my time, though, I spent comfortably resting on my spine in a soft chair before an open fire in the Officer's Club Lounge with a book in one

(Please turn to page 28)

From the
PRACTICES OF
PEACE
TO THE PRACTICE OF
WAR



Stove and Heater Plant Converted to Efficient Manufacturing of Practice Bombs by **LAMSON CONVEYORS**

When one of the great West Coast makers of stoves and heaters was awarded a contract for the production of 100 lb. practice bombs, it faced many problems. Materials handling was one of the most difficult. Moving raw materials to initial processes and semi-processed materials through operations was especially challenging, due to the irregular shapes of the component parts—and of the bomb itself. Second—no single building large enough for the complete job was available. Lamson engineers, employing a series of overhead and belt conveyors, linked two buildings into one smoothly operating unit, moving hard-to-handle materials to the job in either building.

Our engineers have selected 17 actual cases presenting difficult problems of conversion, analyzed them for you and presented solutions and results in

an informative booklet entitled "Case Histories to Aid You in Blueprinting Conversion to Peace." Send coupon for your free copy.

LAMSON CONVEYORS and TUBES

LAMSON CORPORATION
 950 Lamson St., Syracuse 1, N. Y.

Send me a copy of "Case Histories to Aid You in Blueprinting Conversion to Peace."

Name..... Class.....

College.....

Address.....

State.....



THE BOOKSHELF

(Continued from page 26)

hand and a John Collins in the other. That is my idea of the way to fight a war!

During my leave, I took the opportunity to visit the famous Taj Mahal—just to make my Cook's Tour of India complete. Since so much has been said and written of the Taj, it isn't necessary to give any detailed description; words and pictures cannot describe it anyway, and it must be seen to really be appreciated. It is the first example of famous monumental architecture in which I have not been disappointed; such things usually impress me about as much as a Class C movie that has been advertised by an aggressive publicity agent. From the bronze crescent atop the marble dome to the marble base on which it stands, the Taj is perfect in every detail. From the moment I stepped through the huge sandstone gate into the garden of the Taj, I felt that I had been transported from the Twentieth back to the Sixteenth Century and I almost expected to see ladies of the Harem come strolling across the lawn with Shah Jahan in hot pursuit.

This feeling was even stronger when, later, I visited the palace which Shah Jahan had built, and saw the Jasmine tower in which he sat and fondly watched as the monument to his favorite wife was being built across the river. The palace was as lavish and as unbelievable as any that Hollywood has yet produced and was complete with everything that a self-respecting palace should have—high, fortress-like walls, a moat, quarters and a playground for the Harem, a marble reception room, countless hidden passages and secret tunnels, and a dungeon. The most amazing thing to me was the system which supplied water for the baths and for the numerous fountains; since they had no pumps, the entire arrangement was made of reservoirs placed high enough to permit gravity to give the water sufficient strength to form fountains. One fountain was even arranged so that oil lamps could be placed behind it to illuminate the water. I always thought that such things were developed with Rockefeller Center. That about covers the latest travels of "Halliburton" Herbruck, so I shall close for now and get a bit of "sack time," as the AAF so aptly calls sleeping.